



**For immediate release
April 23, 2008**

**Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453**

STATE OFFICIALS LAUNCH SECOND ANNUAL “GREAT PARK PURSUIT”

*Six-week outdoor adventure contest challenges youngsters
to disconnect from cyberspace and reconnect with open space*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is launching its second annual Great Park Pursuit, a six-week series of free family adventures in Massachusetts State Parks. This year's first event, on Saturday, May 10, will be at Borderland State Park in Sharon, Mansfield, and North Easton.

Last year, more than 400 teams registered for Great Park Pursuit activities, starting in the Blue Hills Reservation in Milton and ending at Castle Island in South Boston. During the series, they hiked to beautiful views, learned to fish, pitched a tent, roasted s'mores, discovered secrets of the past, rode in a horse-drawn wagon, and much more.

This year's events also will take place on six consecutive Saturdays through June 14, also in a different state park each week. The goal is to connect children and adults with the outdoors through their state forests, beaches, and parks. The program challenges people of all ages to disconnect from cyberspace and reconnect with open space by participating in games and activities outdoors.

Each week, teams will log onto the contest website, www.greatparkpursuit.org, for clues and to learn where the game will take place the following Saturday. Teams that participate in five of the six weeks will be eligible to win outdoor adventure gear packages.

“Television and the Internet have replaced once-traditional after-school activities such as hiking, fishing, and biking,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles. “We envision the Great Park Pursuit as a first step in building the next generation of environmental stewards.”

Massachusetts is one of several New England states that have created Great Park Pursuit programs. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection held the first Great Park Pursuit series in 2006 to attract families, including those in urban areas, to the wide range of recreational opportunities throughout state parks.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Here in Massachusetts, small groups of children and adults register as “teams” to participate in activities and contests in participating state parks. Teams can be families, but they can be other groups of adults and children, too. Each team must include at least one person 18 years or older and at least one person under 18.

“The Great Park Pursuit gives the participating teams a sampling of what our more than 450,000 acres of state and urban parks offer on a daily basis,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “Let the games begin!”

The Great Park Pursuit comes at a time when youngsters are spending a disproportionate amount of time indoors. Studies report that 33 percent of Massachusetts high school students watch three or more hours of TV on an average school day, while only 25 percent engage in even moderate physical activity five days a week.

The Great Park Pursuit is free, but teams must register to be eligible to win the prizes. For more information, visit www.greatparkpursuit.org.

#

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.